

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 21, 2024
6:30 PM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, March 21, 2024. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Council members attending: Laura Johnson, Suzanne Brown, Clinton Holland, and Frank Destadio.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Presentation

A. Southern Crescent Technical College

The Mayor welcomed Dr. Irvin Clark, president of Southern Crescent Technical College, and reminded everyone that the College's Fayette Center was in the heart of Peachtree City at the former Booth Middle School. Clark introduced Vice President for Institutional Research Dr. Chris Daniel and also congratulated Peachtree City on earning a regional economic development award this week.

Clark updated Council on Southern Crescent Technical College's accomplishments over the past year and its plans for the future. He stated that the focus was workforce development through a three-tiered program of adult education, technical education, and economic development.

Through technical education, the school offered associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Adult education focused on General Educational Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL), while economic development included short-term training programs. Clark went over the College's strategic plan for 2024 through 2028, which was geared toward preparing students to be work-ready.

This semester saw 6,300 students enrolled, up more than 18% from this time last year, and there were about 2,050 students in the dual enrollment program. Total credit hours were up about 15% from last year.

Clark listed the high demand sector programs the school offered: automotive, aviation, certified nursing assistant, commercial truck driving, registered nursing, licensed practical nursing, and manufacturing. They had been tasked by the General Assembly and the Governor to focus on these areas, and all enrollments had increased. Clark said about 9% of the College's students were Fayette residents.

Clark told Council that Peachtree City residents would likely be seeing the two technology trailers around town. Those trailers, one for welding technology and the

other for industrial systems technology, were set up like regular classrooms and brought training opportunities right to the manufacturing facilities.

The Fayette County Center also offered an entrepreneurship program for graduating high school seniors who wanted to become commercial truck drivers and owners, which was a high-demand field. Also, there was an LPN/paramedic bridge program leading to an RN degree, with Clark noting they were proud to now offer a nursing program in Fayette County.

Holland asked if they received support from the local health care community. Clark replied that Piedmont Fayette had been very helpful.

Clark explained that the nursing program could be offered in Fayette because of articulation agreements with Clayton State University and Gordon State College. Students could articulate their credits to either of those schools and earn a bachelor's degree. That was something Piedmont Fayette wanted them to focus on because they wanted to hire bachelor's level nurses. Students could earn credits at Southern Crescent then transfer to Clayton State, all the while staying in Fayette County.

He then highlighted the apprenticeship programs for high demand careers, saying a lot of Fayette companies would be getting involved. The General Assembly had appropriated \$10 million that companies could use to support workforce development through apprenticeships for students and incumbent workers who wanted to develop new skills.

The educator externship program connected educators in local schools with what they were doing at Southern Crescent Technical College, Clark remarked. Talent Strong focused on high school juniors and would help them enter the pipeline for the high demand industries. Fayette specifically had a need for machine tool technology, mechatronics, and industrial systems technology.

The College currently was creating a Robotics, Automation, Advanced Manufacturing, and Economic Development (RAAME) Center to help support automation in advanced manufacturing, and Fayette County would be a beneficiary, Clark stated.

Johnson, saying she had a daughter who was taking dual enrollment classes through Southern Crescent, asked what programs students could take from start to finish at the Fayette location. Clark listed civil engineering, nursing, certified nursing assistant, emergency medical services, and general education.

Council thanked him for the presentation and said they were glad for the work the Center was doing.

B. Recreation Master Plan Update by CPL

Cyndee Bonacci of CPL noted it had been awhile since she last visited with Council, and she was there to update them on what was going on with the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The survey was still open, but she said they had pulled data in order to begin formulating some recommendations. Bonacci listed the CPL team members, saying she was the project manager for Peachtree City's plan development. There were a host of others supporting the project, too, she remarked.

CPL was working on the survey with a company called Digital Media House. About five years ago, this company and CPL collaborated to develop a program that they used to produce data-driven surveys. Her team had worked with Peachtree City staff for about two months to develop questions and opened the survey to the public in December 2023. It had been promoted through the City website, social media, facility posters, and at public events. Once they hit the benchmark, Bonacci said they could begin to pull data and what she would be presenting was pulled on March 20. More surveys were coming in daily, but she said the trends were becoming clear. The survey would end April 30.

The survey data could be filtered by residency, gender, ethnicity, age group, and number in household. They had crafted it so that it should not take longer than 10 minutes to complete, and the goal was to receive at least 1,900 responses in the five-month period, which was a 5% response rate based on population. Bonacci said that number was reached in mid-February. Filtering software prevented duplicate responses. Another goal was representation across all demographics.

At that moment, Bonacci reported, they were at 2,110 responses. The survey was open to both residents and non-residents because people who did not live in the city often participated in sports leagues or visited the parks. However, she would be reporting that night only on the responses of Peachtree City residents.

About 72% of the respondents were Caucasian, and nearly 60% were female. Bonacci explained that they had wanted to include the schools in the survey, asking fourth graders and 10th graders their opinions, but the school system did not want to participate. Therefore, the survey numbers were low for younger age groups. She said she and Recreation Director Cathy Wilder had talked about some other ways they could get younger people to weigh in.

One survey question asked how respondents rated their satisfaction with existing Parks and Recreation facilities. A large majority said they were satisfied, while others said they were neutral. Bonacci said a neutral response was always a question mark. Interviews had shown that many people thought facilities were adequate, but not up to Peachtree City standards.

The number one requirement for a recreation facility was personal safety, the survey showed, followed by maintenance and appearance and a variety of parks

and facilities. These responses trended among all demographics.

Another question asked how often the respondent visited a playground? Never was the most common answer, and Bonacci hypothesized that was because Peachtree City had a large population of older people. They could break it down by age groups and see how the numbers fell. A similar question was how often respondents visited a facility.

The number of responses was about equal when asked if they had children between ages 5 and 17 at home. Most people said they were satisfied or neutral with the children/youth programming offered by the City. Very satisfied was at the bottom, and Bonacci said that showed there was room for improvement.

Bonacci reported that 66% of the respondents were between 18 and 55. Most respondents were neutral when asked about adult programs offered by the City, and she said she would prefer an opinion--either hot or cold. A neutral response did not provide any information. The next highest response was from people who did not participate in adult programming, and that told them they needed to look at what it would take to get those adults more involved. Was it additional program offerings or new facilities?

Approximately 34% of the respondents were seniors older than 55. A large majority said they did not participate in senior programming offered by the City, and that was another area they needed to consider.

Respondents were asked what prevented them from using parks and recreation facilities. The top response was that what they were looking for was not offered. She remarked that Peachtree City seemed to have a little of everything, so that response was puzzling, but they needed to figure out what it was that people thought was lacking.

Another question explored options to raise funds for parks and facilities. The Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) was the top answer, followed by tournaments and events that would increase revenue. Another popular option was to increase non-resident fees.

Then the survey asked what amount the respondent would be willing to pay per household. Half of them said they would not support this idea, but Bonacci pointed out that this meant half of them would support up to a \$50 household fee just for parks and recreation programs. If there were 15,000 households in Peachtree City, an extra \$50 from each would net \$750,000 a year.

Another question asked if the respondent left Peachtree City to participate in recreation programs, and 41% said they did. That was high, she commented, especially considering what Peachtree City had to offer. Most respondents said they left because programs and facilities were not offered by the City.

The survey had helped them compile a list of the top 10 recreation amenities. As was typical in most communities, walking, hiking, and bicycle trails were at the top. Next was event/festival fields and open play areas. The amphitheater and outdoor swimming pools were next on the list, followed by playgrounds for ages 6 to 12, which Bonacci said was a hard age group to meet. Rec centers/gymnasiums/multi-use courts were next, and the indoor swimming pool was also on the list. Rounding out the favorites were the boat/kayak launches and football, lacrosse, and multi-purpose fields. These were across all age groups.

The Mayor asked if these were the top 10 of what respondents used and enjoyed or what they wanted? Bonacci said it was what they currently used and what was most important to them.

The top 10 passive activities were walking/hiking, canoeing/kayaking, arts/crafts/ceramics, biking, theater/performance, cooking classes, jogging/running, nature study/watching, dog walking/activities, and gardening.

Top 10 special events were the Farmers Market, Fourth of July parade and fireworks, food and drink festivals, holiday events, Fred Brown Amphitheater concerts, arts and crafts festivals, Shakerag Arts and Crafts Festival, concert series, fall festival and movie night, and Hometown Holiday.

Pickleball was number one on the top 10 list of active activities, followed by golf, soccer, summer camps, basketball, baseball/softball, tennis, swim team, disc golf, and mountain biking. Volleyball was number one for ages 8 to 17, followed by skateboard/bikes, football, sand volleyball, and swim team. Indoor soccer took the top spot for ages 18 to 25, with pickleball, mountain biking, skateboard/bikes, and soccer also listed. Ages 25 to 45, which Bonacci noted were prime parenting ages, listed soccer, summer camps, baseball/softball, basketball, and swim team as the top picks.

Ages 46 to 55 and ages 55 and older were very similar in their lists, with pickleball and golf at the top for both. Disc golf and tennis appeared in both categories, but the younger group also listed mountain biking.

There were three basic processes during a master plan, Bonacci explained. They evaluated what already existed, which included data collection and a review of previous master plans. Next was a look at inventory, which in Peachtree City was massive. All facilities were rated on a scale of "excellent" down to "poor."

After the inventory was complete, they would conduct a gap analysis, followed by a needs assessment. There would be a final data review after the survey closed at the end of April. The team would make recommendations, with opportunities for public and staff input. Next was the final report/plan and the presentation to Council for adoption. Bonacci said she hoped it would be a living document that could

serve the City and guide decisions for at least 10 years.

Learnard asked about the timeframe. The gap analysis was starting now, Bonacci said, and staff would be consulted to make sure nothing was missed anything on the inventory. The gap analysis would compare Peachtree City to the standard for cities of comparable size, but they would be identifying a "Peachtree City standard," as well, through the needs assessment. The final data review would take place after the survey closed, then the recommendations would be discussed. She intended for the plan to come to Council for a vote by June or July at the latest.

Destadio asked if these slides were available, and she said staff had her presentation and Council access it, too. There was a new process that she was just figuring out how to use that would allow them to view live data and filter it as they wanted.

Was there a point where a citizen advisory committee could be incorporated into this? Brown asked, saying Peachtree City had historically utilized these committees to draw on the expertise of residents.

In January, Bonacci remarked, they did stakeholder interviews that included staff and Council and that data was looked at separately from the survey data and had already been reviewed. When they got to the recommendations, Bonacci said they could do an open house or public forum so people could ask questions and comment before the final report stage.

City Manager Robert Curnow recalled there was a plan to form citizen advisory groups in several areas. One was specific to recreation and would deal with what happened after this process. He noted that Bonacci and the CPL team were doing all the heavy lifting and would make a recommendation based on their expertise in the industry; having this data would help the citizen advisory group move the process along after the plan was complete. Right now, Curnow continued, the important part was to let CPL finish the work and give them a blueprint for how to move to the next level.

Johnson asked if they looked at the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and what was needed? Bonacci told her they started out with aerials of each facility and also toured each site; looking at ADA was part of that. Sometimes ADA could not be accommodated due to the age of a facility.

Holland stated the report looked good so far. He said stakeholders were one type of group, but getting average citizens involved offered a different perspective. He mentioned that nighttime softball used to be an option in Peachtree City. Bonacci said the whole point of the survey process was to allow all demographics to voice their opinions. That was why the survey was left open for five months, which was an unusually long time. They wanted everyone to feel like they had an opportunity

to be heard.

The Mayor thanked Bonacci and said they looked forward to seeing what came next.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

Learnard said she, Holland, and City Clerk Yasmin Julio attended the South Metro Development Outlook Conference earlier in the week, and Peachtree City was presented with the Economic Development Award, which was due to job creation, infrastructure improvements, and policies favorable to industry and to industry expansion. The Mayor attributed their success in recruiting hundreds of new jobs to Peachtree City to partnerships with the Fayette County Development Authority, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), industries, private real estate companies, and with Southern Crescent Technical College. She said the award was in the display case in the City Hall lobby. Holland added that this was a prestigious award and the other cities were envious of Peachtree City.

Public Comment

Autai Negaty said he owned a company that imported Swiss wine. He remarked that he would be needing a warehouse in the future and proposed they split the space and create an 18-court indoor pickleball facility on one side. He noted that at least 16 courts were required to host professional tournaments, and this would bring revenue to Peachtree City.

John Riley noted he had spoken to the SPLOST committee and to Council several times previously about the near-constant noise created by the players on the Braelinn pickleball courts near his house. He said a professional pickleball referee who was also a sound engineer had measured noise from a pickleball court at 70 decibels from 100 feet away, 30 decibels louder than normal background noise from a neighborhood and the same as freeway noise. He pointed out that the decibel scale was logarithmic, meaning every 10-decibel increase was twice as loud as the previous. Riley said this noise left their outdoor areas unusable at times.

Riley said the Fayette Pickleball Club empathized with their plight. He asked the City to build more courts that did not intrude on citizens' peace and quiet and to close the Braelinn courts.

Scott Larson then told Council he lived closest to the Braelinn courts and had lived in the neighborhood more than 20 years. He said he had a new deck that faced the courts, as did his bedroom and a guest bedroom. He moved there before the courts were built, but now the noise from the courts on warm days was amazing. He invited Council to visit him and observe the conditions. He asked the City to consider another location.

Loyd Smith said he originally intended to talk about the lack of training facilities for pickleball in Peachtree City. He related that pickleball was an easy game to learn, and all ages could play. However, Peachtree City was losing revenue by not providing

facilities for tournaments. He pledged to come back to talk about training but noted that the Recreation Master Plan survey had showed pickleball was important to several age groups, and the City needed to support it.

Cheryl Averill told Council she and her family had always been very involved in the recreation opportunities offered by the City. Now she was an active pickleball player and a member of the local club. She said she was impressed with what they had been told about the master plan and wanted Council to know the pickleball club would work with them to provide opportunities to everyone. Parks and Rec should consider letting the pickleball club offer instruction. She noted that they were certified to do so. Also, Averill said the club would like to hear more discussion about the use of SPLOST funds for pickleball facilities.

Holly Maestas mentioned that the ordinance for special events, media and production permits only required three days notice to neighborhood residents before filming began. She said the City was given much greater notice and asked that residents be provided the same amount of time. It had been very disruptive, with hundreds of contract workers and more than 50 vehicles onsite in her neighborhood for several weeks.

She also mentioned the need for traffic calming on MacDuff at Franklin Ridge. She said it was dangerous because the traffic was too fast. Maestas added that she would be speaking to the homeowners association (HOA) the following week.

Todd Weinreb of Kedron Hills thanked Council for upholding the prior Council's decision to close a road through the subdivision to golf carts. He mentioned that the neighborhood residents took a lot of abuse every time this closure was brought back up. Weinreb said he felt they had done all they could to accommodate a disabled young person who used the road to get to her job in Peachtree City. He added that he had a special needs child, and he worried about him getting hit in traffic. He asked Council to consider everyone's needs if they were going to look at re-opening this and consider the plans for future development in the area.

Agenda Changes

Minutes

A. March 5, 2024 City Council Workshop Minutes

Destadio moved to approve the March 5, 2024, City Council workshop minutes and the March 7, 2024, City Council meeting minutes. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. March 7, 2024 City Council Meeting Minutes

Johnson moved to approve Consent Agenda items A-C. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

A. Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Amendment

APPROVED 5-0

B. On-call staff for Kedron Fieldhouse

APPROVED 5-0

C. SP Meditec Stormwater Facility Maintenance Agreement

APPROVED 5-0

Old Agenda Items

New Agenda Items

A. 03-24-02 Tennis Center Pro Shop Renovation Project

City Engineer Dave Borkowski said he recommended Council award a bid to Crown Service Contractors for the renovation of the Tennis Center Pro Shop building. He explained that, as viewed from Planterra Way, there were two smaller buildings in front of the Tennis Center. One was a locker room and the other was formerly the Pro Shop building. He said this building needed many repairs, including a new roof and interior renovations.

They contracted with CPL architects and received five bids to carry out the work. Staff reviewed the bids and the apparent low bidder, AWG, was not e-verified. In addition, after bid opening, AWG withdrew their bid because they discovered one of their subcontractors underestimated their work. Therefore, staff went to the next lowest bid, which was from Crown, and reviewed their documentation and references and found it acceptable. Borkowski said staff recommended they award the bid to Crown in the amount of \$467,105. This would be funded through the American Rescue Plan, and there was adequate money available.

Destadio confirmed that it was the low bidder, not the architect, who made the mistake.

Brown said this was much needed; she and Johnson had visited this building and were both surprised that it was in such bad shape.

Brown moved to approve New Agenda item 03-24-02 Tennis Center Pro Shop Renovation Project, with the bid awarded to Crown Service Contractors in the amount of \$467,105. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 03-24-03 Field of Hope Turf Resurfacing Project

Curnow announced that Cathy Wilder had recently been promoted to Parks and Recreation Director after a nationwide search for a new director. He said they were extremely glad to have her in this position.

Wilder said Field of Hope was in the Peachtree City Athletic Complex. It was home to the Challenger League, which was the adaptive baseball program that was part of Little League, and also was used for T-ball. Unlike other Peachtree City fields, it

had an artificial surface, which Wilder said was about 20 years old and showing a good deal of wear. She presented photos to illustrate the gaps in the seams and cracking.

The plans called for artificial turf. The existing field would be demolished, Wilder explained, and a new drainage system would be installed. A shock pad would be laid down, with sand and turf on top. All lines, base measurements, and field size would remain the same. Work would begin at the end of May and should take about eight weeks.

She said the turf's lifespan was about eight to 10 years, and the replacement cost would be about 50% of the original installation cost because the drainage system was already in place. Maintenance included replenishing the sand infill, weekly sweeping, and an annual safety inspection, which included an impact test. The maintenance equipment and manual were included in the bid.

The design was done by POND and Company, and three bids were received for construction. The recommendation was to award the bid to Advanced Sports Group LLC for their low bid in the amount of \$340,000.

This was a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project with funding of \$292,575 available. They were asking for an additional \$47,425 from the CIP Contingency Fund.

Destadio said he did quite a few artificial turfs for Fulton County Schools, and they discovered that lead-based paint had been used to mark the lines. He asked Wilder about this, and she said she could assure him they would make sure whatever paint they used was safe, but the actual markings were made into the turf.

Holland made sure \$340,000 was the maximum they would pay, and Wilder said it was.

Johnson moved to approve New Agenda item 03-24-03 to award the bid for the Field of Hope turf resurfacing project from Advanced Sports Group LLC for a total amount not to exceed \$340,000. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. 03-24-04 Gateway Bridge Landscape Project

Assistant City Manager Justin Strickland remarked that this project and others that had been discussed were a long time coming to fruition. This was the bridge that had been constructed over SR 54 West near MacDuff Parkway in 2021.

Landscaping was not done; only grass was planted, and now there was erosion. It also was difficult for maintenance crews to cut the grass on the steep hills. He pointed out that this look did not meet the "Peachtree City standard."

They had hired All South Landscape to complete a design, and he showed what they had come up with for both the north and south sides. The plan was to remove

all current vegetation and install new landscaping. The total area was about eight acres, Strickland noted, and the bid also included a two-year maintenance agreement. After two years, the landscaping should be established and require minimal maintenance from the City. Staff's objectives for this project were to prevent further erosion, select appropriate plants for long-term maintenance, and beautify an area that was passed by 43,000 vehicles a day.

Strickland showed some conceptual designs, noting that it looked flat on the screen, but was actually a steep hill. It would take several years for the plantings to grow to resemble the concepts, although he cautioned they would never look exactly like they were depicted.

They received four bids, with the lowest from Brightview Landscape Services. Staff recommended awarding the bid to them in an amount not to exceed \$530,272.78. The item was funded through SPLOST 2017 project 9 with the balance coming from the SPLOST contingency fund.

Destadio said he understood that one of the companies that bid was upset because preference was not given to locally owned businesses, but Curnow had given him a pretty good justification. He asked Curnow to explain to the public.

Curnow said they went through a competitive bid process, and the lowest bid was selected. The bid from the company Destadio referenced was higher. The City did not have a provision in its procurement code that gave preference to local companies in the bid process, although that was something they could consider, if Council desired.

Brown said what looked like grass was more of a ground cover that did not need to be mowed. Strickland said there was juniper, which established a root system to halt erosion and did not need to be trimmed.

Brown moved to approve New Agenda item 03-24-04 to award the bid for the Gateway Bridge landscape project to Brightview Landscape Services for a total amount not to exceed \$530,272.78. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearings

A. 03-24-05 New Alcohol License - Momonoki - 2100 Highway 54 E, Unit 100

Julio said this new sushi restaurant was at 2100 Highway 54 East, next to Brandon's Package Store. The applicant and the location met all requirements and if this was approved, the applicant would be required to pay the annual fee for malt beverage, wine, and distilled spirits, which was \$5,000, plus \$500 for Sunday sales.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. Autai Negaty said he knew the owner and

his sushi was excellent. He was in favor of this being approved. No one else wished to speak in favor or in opposition, and the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Holland said his only concern was that the restaurant was always crowded, but that indicated something about the high quality of the food.

Brown moved to approve Public Hearing item 03-24-05 New Alcohol License for Momonoki. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

A. Introduction of new Executive Director for the Convention and Visitors Bureau

Curnow introduced Tyler Runyon as the new Executive Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Runyon came from the Atlanta Airport District CVB.

The Mayor asked Curnow about work going on in front of City Hall. He noted they had pressure washed and sealed the building, and now the dead crape myrtles had been dug up, and the area would be re-planted with low-maintenance plants.

B. Change in time for the second City Council meeting of the month for the next three months

Learnard then explained that while the April 4 Council meeting would be at the regular time of 6:30 p.m., the second April meeting, on the 18th would be held at 9:30 a.m. In May and June, the first meetings would be in the evening; the second in the morning. The focus was to see if they could have more voices heard from people who might not be able to attend in the evenings. They would try this for three months and see how it went.

Executive Session

Holland moved to adjourn to executive session to discuss personnel matters at 8:09 p.m. Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Destadio moved to reconvene in regular session at 8:20 p.m. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Holland moved to adjourn the meeting. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary

Kim Learnard, Mayor